



**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

**News Release**

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**MR 2003 02**

For Immediate Release: February 27, 2004

**EMPLOYMENT IN HAWAII AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH**

**Hawaii's Unemployment Rate Falls to Under Four Percent in January**

**HONOLULU-** In January 2004, the amount of people employed in Hawaii reached an all-time high of 603,200. This represents the largest employed population in the history of the State of Hawaii. The statewide seasonally adjusted labor force totaled 627,900 and was comprised of 603,200 employed and 24,700 unemployed.

The statewide seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in January was 3.9 percent, a decline of 0.5 percentage point over December 2003. In comparison, the national seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dipped slightly, going from 5.7 percent in December to 5.6 percent in January. The 2003 annual average statewide unemployment rate was 4.3 percent, while the national unemployment rate was 6.0 percent.

In another measure of employment, the total seasonally adjusted statewide job count grew over-the-month by 1,800 jobs, to 576,000. There are four major industry groupings where seasonally adjusted job counts are calculated: Trade, Transportation, & Utilities, Education & Health Services, Leisure & Hospitality, and Government. The bulk of the job gains in January over December occurred in government (+1,500), mostly due to increases in the Department of

Education. The remaining seasonally adjusted major industry groupings were fairly stable in over-the-month.

After a fairly level seasonally adjusted statewide job count over the first half of 2003, the number of jobs rose in January 2004 over June 2003 by 11,700, or 2.0 percent. Sizable job gains occurred in the June 2003- January 2004 period in the three private sector industry groupings. Leisure & Hospitality grew by 2,300 jobs, Education & Health increased by 1,800 jobs, and Trade, Transportation, & Utilities went up by 1,600 jobs.

"Our state has reached a significant milestone," said Nelson Befitel, Director of Labor and Industrial Relations about the largest employed workforce in the history of Hawaii. "Furthermore, both of the employment measures the department tracks, the unemployment rate and job count, continue to reflect the persistent strength of the local economy."

Starting with the January 2004 employment numbers, the Hawaii State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations will focus on seasonally adjusted unemployment rates. The seasonally adjusted estimates eliminate the effects of events that follow a more or less regular pattern each year. This makes the series smoother and permits easier observation and analysis of cyclical, trend and other non-seasonal movements.

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